

# Of Satellites, Spies and SALT

By M. STANTON EVANS

That sensational trial of a former CIA employe convicted of spying for the Soviet Union has wide-ranging implications for the future of the Cold War.

It's not only that the trial produced a chronicle of attempted subversion by the Soviet Embassy and KGB, as important as that is (and as much as it reflects on the supposed "easing of tensions" under the policy of detente). It's also the nature of the information the Soviets were trying to obtain, which William Kampiles was charged with having supplied to them in exchange for several thousand dollars.

The item Kampiles turned over to the Soviets is something called the KH-11 technical manual, a volume describing the operations of the Keyhole 11 reconnaissance satellite. The KH 11 is our most advanced reconnaissance instrument, a giant photographic lab capable of filming missile sites and other things in great detail from altitudes of 100 miles and more. In a traditional Cold War context, the fact that the Soviets would be interested in information of this sort is readily understandable.

What makes this case especially interesting, however, is its bearing on the SALT discussions between the United States and the USSR on limitation of strategic arms. The KH 11 is central to the success of these negotiations, both because its powers of verification are needed to insure compliance with the treaties and because a willingness to permit such verification is one of the things the Soviets have supposedly agreed to.

In the past, the problem of verification has been a major hang-up of arms negotiations with the Communists. They have a track record of violating agreements of this sort (and most others), and also are dead set against on-site inspection of what they are doing. So the question naturally arises of how we can be sure they are abiding by agreements not to deploy certain weapons, or not to up-grade the strength of certain others.

The answer devised in the SALT negotiations was "national technical means of verification"—gobbledygook for space satellite technology, radar surveillance, seismic detection, and the like. By highly sophisticated methods of aerial photography, in particular, we were supposed to be able to monitor Soviet performance under SALT and thus be sure their promises were kept. So crucial was this factor that one of the things written into the agreement was a proviso that such "national technical means" are not to be interfered with.

There are many problems with this formula—most obviously the fact that there are many developments in the realm of arms control that can't be monitored in such a fashion. For the moment, however, the relevant point is that the Soviets have been busy violating their pledges about non-interference with our verification methods. As former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird observed last year, the Soviets have pursued an elaborate strategy of concealment aimed at nullifying this proviso. In addition, there have been indications that they have tried to "jam" our surveillance equipment by use of lasers and other devices—all in explicit violation of the SALT accords.

An effort to figure out the workings of the KH 11 would fit in perfectly, of course, with a Soviet strategy of concealment and interference with our means of verification. It is routinely reported in the Nation's Capital, indeed, that discovery of KH 11's capabilities has caused the Soviets to launch a more extensive cover-up to insure that their activities are concealed from the satellite's inquiring eye.

Thus the Washington Post reports U.S. officials as saying "the disclosures in the manual are apparently prompting the Soviets to hide some weapons previously photographed by the satellite. The KH 11 was misclassified by the Soviets as a non-photographic satellite, sources said, so they did not bother to try to hide sensitive weapons or operations from it when it passed overhead. Therefore, distressed intelligence officials said, the KH 11 was able to look down on Russia from space without the impediment of cover-up efforts."

Not mentioned in this story is the fact that our satellites, under terms of the SALT agreements, are supposed to be able to gaze down on the USSR without impediment; the author in fact appears to extenuate the Soviets' behavior by arguing that we also attempt to hide what we are doing from their satellites. Even if true this is cold comfort, since it means that SALT's reliance on "national technical means" for verification is an admitted sham, and that we are back to depending on Moscow's good intentions for enforcement of the arms agreements.

And that in turn raises an ominous question: If the Soviets are willing to go so far to keep us from monitoring their performance under SALT, how likely is it that they are abiding by the other terms of the agreement?